

**Public**

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FAX: (202) 296-08-26

**e-mail: eclaatmn.com**

Mr.

President of the Committee of Government Representatives  
On the Participation of the Civil Society of the FTAA Participating Countries  
ECLAC  
1825 K Street, NW, Suite 1120  
Washington DC, 20006  
USA

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Consultative Andean Labor Council (CCLA) an entity of the Andean Integration System, comprised by the most representative unions of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, is pleased to convey to you, their institutional position, in reply to the public invitation extended to the civil society, to give its opinion on the FTAA process.

### **Lack of a Social Scope**

The FTAA process was designed and is being carried out from an exclusively business perspective, without taking into consideration the fact that, the agreements that may be adopted, could deeply affect the socioeconomic reality of each one of our countries.

From a pseudo economic point of view, the intention is to avoid that the future FTAA Treaty include significant social changes; therefore, not only avoiding to take into account the opinion of the citizenry but mainly, it does not allow for the active participation of the different fora implemented. This reflects an anti-democratic attitude that breaches the implicit social pact of our societies; societies that have adopted the democratic system as their own, thus taking away from them, the right of their peoples to forge their own future.

Consequently, we believe that it is essential to draft a responsible proposal for the participation of the civil society, one that goes beyond the mere act of receiving our opinions.

Said proposal should consider the following options:

1. The creation of a Labor Union Forum
2. The incorporation of a labor agreement within the FTAA/Social Clause
3. The General Consultation of the Agreements at a Hemispheric level

### **Stagnation of the Committee on the Participation of the Civil Society**

The sole initiative to acknowledge civil society has been done through the creation of the Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of the Civil Society. Unfortunately, the position of the governments themselves has not allowed for the election of a President for this committee, blocking in this manner the operation of the same and its adoption of a Labor Agenda.

On this regard, we would like to establish firmly our strongest condemnation, of the official position of those to whom such entrapment must be attributed to; and we demand for the governments to proceed with said election, as soon as possible.

### **Equal Participation of the Labor Movement**

Said policy, which is opposed to acknowledging civil society, is clearly set aside in the case of one of its participants, the business sector, which has been made a privileged player in the process.

We, the workers and their representative organizations, can not do anything less but to demand a more equitable treatment; especially when most of the business integration processes have acknowledged the role of the labor sector, such as the European Union, the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), Mercosur or as in our case, the Andean Community.

The acknowledgment of the Unions is not necessarily a reflection of their membership level or a representation from a limited perspective, it is rather, the acknowledgment that Unions in the world have been able to become natural authorities, through which, the popular masses of our countries can channel their most beloved aspirations. It is evident that many of their suggestions and proposals are aimed to deffending not only the exclusive view of the labor sector, which is not a limited one, but rather, to making a commitment towards the sustainable and fair development of our societies.

### **Acknowledgment of the economic differences in our countries**

On the business aspect, we are concerned about the logic through which all the countries that are negotiating the FTAA, are in principle, "equal", without recognizing the huge differences and soundness of our economies, and consequently, the unfairness it can represent for the industrial development of our countries, if the agreements are adopted while still maintaining this position.

The FTAA must consider the greater development of trade among our countries, guaranteeing at the same time the equilibrium of our trade balances.

### **Impact of Multinational Corporations on the Workers of the Americas**

The globalization of the world economy has the multinational corporations as the main players that move enormous amounts of capital, the large investors being the ones that hold the power of great influence in our countries; policies are adopted from their headquarters, on many occasions these collide with international labor rights; for this reason we specifically propose the adoption of the Declaration on Multinational Corporations, as approved by the ILO.

Lastly, given the series of circumstances and ways to conceive the FTAA, that do not allow it to be viewed as a true process of integration and that only limit it to the business aspects of it, we will continue insisting on our efforts --together with the social organizations and the democratic forces of our societies-- to not allow the FTAA become an additional instrument for the domination and backwardness of our countries, with consequences that are completely negative for our peoples, as it seems to have been designed for.

Having nothing further to express and thanking you for advising us on the consideration given to our observations, we remain,

Truly yours,

/s/ Victor Pardo  
Chairman  
Consultative Andean Labor Council (CCLA)